Edward Snowden's Online Past Revealed

Hundreds of posts reveal views on secrecy, religion, politics, and working in IT. "Society really seems to have developed an unquestioning obedience towards spooky types," he says.

posted on June 12, 2013 at 7:21pm EDT

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Under the name TheTrueHOOHA, Snowden appears to have posted to ArsTechnica, a tech, IT, and geek culture site, hundreds of times over the last ten years.

Source: July 26, 2006 / via: arstechnica.com

The last of his 753 posts, first discovered by Anthony DeRosa, was posted on May 21, 2012, in response to a question about creating a "Dead Man's Switch," a program that would automatically delete a computer's contents if its owner failed to log in periodically. Snowden replies, "You could write one. There are also plenty of orphaned Open Source ones out there you could pick up that need to be finished, if you want a head start." This was the first time he had posted on the forum in six months.

Earlier, in a thread titled, "I'm a screwup," he writes, "Join the army. Worked for me."

Two days later, in a discussion about emerging industries, he suggests "Counterterrorism" is an area that will expand within the next five years.

He talks about not having a high school degree, and working in IT.

First off, the degree thing is crap, at least domestically. If you really have ten years of solid, provable IT experience (and given that you say you're 25, I think it'd probably be best to underestimate), you CAN get a very well paying IT job. You just need to be either actively looking now or get the fuck out of California. I have no degree, nor even a high school diploma, but I'm making much more than what they're paying you even though I'm only claiming six years of experience. It's tough to "break in," but once you land a "real" position, you're made.

It takes a lot of bullshit to get to that point, though. I was unemployed for a full year and then had to work in a non-IT field for six months before I was able to get back in IT and double my salary.

If you do want a degree, I agree that going overseas is a much better idea than attending some $150k domestic diploma mill.

Also, don't discount the Foreign Service. Someone already mentioned it, and it's an amazing deal if you can swing it. I'm not talking Foreign Service Officer, either, just standard IT specialist positions.

They pay for your (ridiculously nice) housing and since you'll be posted overseas, the first ~$80k you make will be tax-free.

Military is always an option as that door is not likely to close in the future. If you do decide to join, though, I would suggest considering using the opportunity to learn a new skill, as opposed to further specializing in IT. You only live once.

Source: Aug 14, 2006 / via: arstechnica.com

He references his age, 22 years old, in 2006.

DISCLAIMER: I'm going to come off sounding as an asshole, but I'm not. It's just the nature of the business. To succeed in a hostile environment, you need to be both confident and aggressive.

Anyway:

You're going into IT. Nobody gives a shit what school you go to. Choose the cheaper school.

Listen to what they say about networking. This is absolutely vital. If somebody likes you, it doesn't even matter if you put your pants on before your underwear in the morning — you will get the job.

What you will need is IT work experience. You must get a job in IT while you're going to school. The sad reality is that an IT degree means DICK in terms of competency to an employer. You need demonstrated, specialized skills to be competitive. SO, you need work experience.

Get a part-time IT gig anywhere you can. Even if you don't want to work through college, that's fine. Get it. Here's the dirty little secret: you can scale back your hours until you're only working four hours a week if you need

more school time. Take leaves of absence, but remain employed. It doesn't matter how many hours you work, because the only thing going on your resume is the number of YEARS you worked there. What DOES matter is that you are the absolute best of friends with your supervisor and when your new post-college employer calls them for a reference, they absolutely BLEED love for you.

As long as you're good at what you do, you'll never have a problem, and that work experience will make that degree worth far more than it is on its own.

People might argue, but they'd be wasting their breath. I speak from personal experience in the most disadvantaged position in the job market. I don't have a degree of ANY type. In fact, I don't even have a high school diploma.

That said, I have $0 in debt from student loans, I make $70k, I just had to turn down offers for $83k and $180k (they're going in a different directions than where I'm heading), and my co-workers have BSs, MSs, and ten to fifteen years of experience. Employers fight over me.

And I'm 22.

That's networking. Good luck.

Source: May 1, 2006 / via: arstechnica.com

Snowden mentions breaking both of his legs during his army training.

...and ever.

Discharges do not happen fast. Both of my legs were broken during AIT and they held on to me until the doctors cleared me to be discharged, and then after being cleared they held onto me for another month just for shits and giggles.

Psych problems = dishonorable/BC discharge depending on how much they hate you. Lots of alleged homos were in the hold unit, too, but they only got a general discharge at best.

If they think he is fucking with them, he is going to get screwed. Hard.

Source: May 13, 2006 / via: arstechnica.com

He expresses disdain for "spooky types" and "pervasive government secrecy."

It really concerns me how little this sort of corporate behavior bothers those outside of technology circles. Society really seems to have developed an unquestioning obedience towards spooky types.

I wonder, how well would envelopes that became transparent under magical federal candlelight have sold in 1750? 1800? 1850? 1900? 1950? Did we get to where we are today via a slippery slope that was entirely within our control to stop, or was it an relatively instantaneous sea change that sneaked in undetected because of pervasive government secrecy?

Source: February 4, 2010 / via: arstechnica.com

All the way back in 2003, he asked for advice on masking his internet activity.

Alright, I'm familiar with the layman's version of how remote proxies can be used to make yourself more anonymous. However, while I have a fairly deep understanding of networking, I've got some serious holes that need to be filled (without pr0n references) regarding how the different protocols come into play with each other ESPECIALLY when you've got a slightly masked IP address.

Fellow Arsians, further my education!

Question 1: Is it possible to reroute -all- traffic through a remote proxy? By all, I mean traffic such as SMTP as opposed to the standard HTTP/FTP/SSH/Socks. How could you go about doing this (Is special software required)?

Question 2: Further, how exactly does it work? How does the packet find it's way back home without accurate IP information? Does it pick up an extra IP address on every "hop," or is every IP address it has been to recorded in the header?

Question 3A (Still following question number 1): Can you hide any protocol behind a proxy? Here's an example of my current thinking:

Your real, physical IP address is 68.1.1.1. You want to connect anonymously via RDP or a similar uncommon protocol to a computer at 68.10.10.10, so that you would be able to anonymously connect via regular, chained HTTP proxies to your favorite websites.

Question 3B:
Is it possible to conceal the IP origin of the example's RDP? If so, how exactly is the datastream still able to make it's way back and forth without being logged? Is there a better solution? Please explain how you would approach that situation.

That's about it for now. If you've got any answers, or if these questions have raised any other questions that you guys might want answered, please feel free to contribute. Ultimately, my goal is to further my own understanding of what would be logged at any given point during transmission. I wouldn't want God himself to know where I've been, you know?

Collective thanks,
-HOOHA

He asks how to set up a CD that would create a fresh, secure machine on any computer.

Old Ones, Sages, Great Minds of the Hive; I pray for your wisdom.

This seems like it should be a reasonably simple question, but I admit that I am ignorant of almost all things virtualized.

TL;DR: How do you launch a VM from a LiveCD? The goal here is to be able to bring a LiveCD (Virus/Malware/Keylogger-free VM-launching platform) and a USB drive (VM Image) to any given computer and be able to your work through the VM without leaving anything behind on the physical host machine.

Follow-on: Are there any software packages out there that support this

functionality out of the box?

Thank you for your help.
-TTH

He talks about the perks of working in IT for the State Department

Work yourself up to Europe.

Say, Department of State. They're understaffed right now, but Europe posts are competitive, but you can get in the door much easier if you express an interest in going to near-east hellholes. Once you're in, tough out the crappy tour and you should be able to pick from a list of preferred posts.

Alternately, get a clearance. If you're cleared, have a lifestyle, and have specialized IT skills, you can go anywhere in the world right now.

Thank god for wars.

http://www.careers.state.gov/opportunities/iraq/index.html

quote:
As a Foreign Service Specialist, you'll receive excellent paid housing or a housing allowance, health and medical coverage, federal retirement benefits, paid education for dependant children between K-12, generous paid leave (This means R&Rs), and an unprecedented chance to see the world and experience different cultures.

Education requirements

Oh, and bonus? Yeah, working in IT for the State Department guarantees you'll have to have a Top Secret clearance. Got a clean record?

If you can handle living in hellholes, DoS is the place to be right now.

He also mentions countries he wouldn't mind moving to.

My list, in order (just like in the poll!) would be:
Japan
Thailand
Korea
China
Australia

China, Korea, and australia might be swapped, though. They're sort of nebulous.

Here, he says it's "unfortunate" that a game was

leaked from a studio he likes.

> Let me dispel the rumor status on one thing:
>
> I don't know the why's or the how's (and nobody else does, either), but as the resident ARRRRrrrrsian, I can confirm with authority that it is real, available and it's easy.
>
> I've always liked Valve as a company; it's unfortunate to see this happen to them. They're like Blizzard — they're the type of company that can really feel gamers.
>
> The only thing I know (and that's word-of-mouth) is why the beta was released — Valve has gone batshit crazy with pursuing anybody who seemed even remotely involved and pushed back the release date even further — the content was kind of like a hostage. Cyb4r terr4r!!11 and all that.
>
> I just want to see what Valve's next step is. If they really do wait four months, they'll have lost their legs.
>
> I've got to get back to trimming me sails, if ye know what I mean.

He asks for programming help:

> Greetings, Old Ones. I come humbly seeking the ageless wisdom of the collective. My knowledge is but the smallest mite in comparison to your great, chitinous shells.
>
> I need to write a script here at work to copy two files once a week and append that day's date to the names. Thinking this should be pretty easy, I wrote a little batch file figuring the relevant operation would simply be the following:
>
> copy x:\source\file1.txt x:\destination\file1%date%.txt
>
> copy x:\source\file2.txt x:\destination\file2%date%.txt
>
> Then I'd simply make the .bat file a scheduled task that runs weekly and hope for the best.
>
> Unfortuantely, the problem with this seems to be that Windows can't understand that kind of syntax. Apparently variables are completely incompatible with filenames in the windows command line. I tried it with different commands and renaming it, but variables didn't seem to work there, either. I could be wrong, though. I'm not a programmer.
>
> So, the question then becomes how else can I accomplish this task within a windows .bat file? Again, this is actually for work, so extra bonus points if anybody can figure out a solution quickly.
>
> Yours in service,
> TTH

He gives advice here for ordering lab supplies — chemicals — to your home.

Yes, they would have a problem with it.

Pay the $40-70 it costs to register a business. You'll never have to pay taxes on it as you'll never make any sales. It's purely a research venture, after all. Use the business certificate to create an account with the supplier — they won't really care what it is, it's just a legal requirement for certain states and types of businesses. In the odd case that they ask what it's for, simply tell them the honest truth of your interest in it. You're a legitimate business, now, after all. Otherwise just say you need a lab sample. You're the graduate, not me. If you're ordering something intensely shady, they might not sell it to you, business or no. Hell, I HOPE they wouldn't.

The only hangup you may have is shipping a HAZMAT to a residential address.

Really, having a business certificate opens many doors. Chemicals, sure, but also wholesalers, industrial equipment, whatever. Anybody with an interest in invention should have their own Sole Proprietorship.

He appears to be an avid gamer and on one occasion jokes about the NSA's plan to surveil citizens using XBoxes.

In many of his posts, he reveals personal details about himself, like his agnosticism.

First, for Peter:

quote:
One can be happy and peaceful but not free (one's happiness need not be conditional on freedom).

This is no more true than GWT's statements. This is entirely dependant on the individual — as is the definition of freedom. Freedom isn't a word the can be (pardon) freely defined. This is the case with so many words, and I think your disagreement with Gwt is a testament (giggle) to this.

Further, on the topic of your quotation: Haven't you ever heard of an American?

The saying goes, "Live free or die," I believe. That seems to intimate a conditional dependence on freedom as a requirement for happiness. Unless you're a part of Heaven's Gate, I guess.

And Peter, as an aside: Dear lord (heh)! You have over thirty thousand posts! Take a moment and stretch!

For GwT:

While I appreciate the Buddhist belief system, and in fact I even marked that as my "religion" on my Army paperwork (agnostic is strangely absent), I feel it is important to point out that it is the restriction of religion, specifically, that is being discussed. Ideally, religion should serve as a resource, a sort of reference or novel approach for examining and finding one's own beliefs. I believe (titter) that your posted "definition" of freedom came under fire because it is simply someone [else's, apparently,] belief being utilized as a -fact-.

As you have debated, that definition can be made to fit. However, as your opponents counter, it can also be disproven.

It is, as Peter stated, conditional.

To summarize, since my writings did not really address my own feelings, I feel that religion, adopted purely, is ultimately representative of blindly making someone else's beliefs your own. So, yes, I feel religion limits humanity insofar that individuality could arguably be taken as necessary (in an emotional sense) to humanity. Religion, taken as a non-negotiable set of beliefs (in this context), would obviously act a limitation of individuality and, thusly, that which makes us human.

However, I feel that, as Caesar was quick to point out, individual belief is not something that we can be without.

...I'm not certain I made that post entirely clear...

And things get a little personal.

My [ex?] girlfriend is the most amazing girl I've ever dated. She's one of those who even wanted it more than me, sometimes, and would kind of sadly paw at my man-totem like a cat after it has killed the prey. Some of it comes from natural sex drive, yes, but this same girl took like six months to get into bed the first time.

A great deal of a successful sexual relationship is taking the time to properly build up to things and establish their comfort level. After the honeymoon phase, things do slack off sometimes, but the more sex you have, the longer you should last and the better you should be for one another. vafarmboy is not shitting you. There have been times when I've have sex marathons from sundown til sunrise.

Once you establish the comfort zone where you don't care when or how many times or how long or who climaxes when or what they're wearing, the sex will be better, longer, and more available. You and her will BOTH know when it's no longer about being horny. The only down side is coming to terms with the idea of losing it.

Damn, I miss her.

Go to your nearest Krispy Kreme Drive-thru. Pick up one of the warm "fresh of the line" ones and go put them on your nightstand.

You have not lived until you've rolled over to post-coital Krispy Kremes.

> That's what being an American is all about.
>
> I recommend them.

Appears to be a joke?

He makes frequent references to working out.

> Alright guys, it's precisely that time of year (well, maybe a little late, but this is Ars) at which everyone gets insecure about being in summer shape.
>
> Anybody want to commit to an Arsian round of P90X? Suggest a shared date window of ~May 1 - July 31, if there's interest.

He really doesn't like the RIAA, having signed a petition against them in May 2006 and later ranting about their actions in August.

> Seeing the crap the RIAA pulls on that site is just sick. One of the guys they sued DIED and they asked for a 60-day stay of the trial so they could file the motions to sue his next-of-kin instead.
> Absolutely disgusting.
>
> That said, this lady didn't really think this through. Would've been smarter to experience a drive failure before all these motions were granted and simply have replaced it/tossed the old one.

He seems to use the word "gay" as pejorative.

> Dude, did he mention a suit at -all- in the OP? Unless you're on a bike, messenger bags are gay. Gay, gay, gay. Super gay. RS gay. And the poor guy is in Europe. That's the last thing he needs.
>
> If you've got to wear a suit everyday, you carry a briefcase or a laptop bag. Something professional, not something fashionable.
>
> quote:
> Professional is optional since I'm here for about a year and manliness isn't considered important by anyone here Big Green
>
>
> Cough. Cough.

He also writes about owning a gun.

> I have a Walther P22. It's my only gun, but I love it to death. It's super cheap to shoot (to the tune of $15/500rds), and I don't intend to be in combat anytime soon.
>
> I could still use it put ten tiny holes in important parts of a home invader if necessary, though.

Source: April 17, 2006 / via: arstechnica.com

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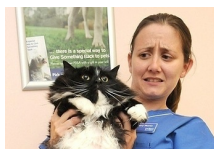
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tokie
5 hours ago

Hey BF, congrats on being a guv tool. :)

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johnnykong
5 hours ago

He was bought by the Chinese government, paid a large sum to 'share' NSA secrets under the premise that he's 'telling truths' to the American people for their benefit. That's why he's in Hong Kong and not some South American socialist country.

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MEP thinks Edward Snowden's Online Past Revealed is **WTF** *about 6 hours ago*

DivaMom2013 ❤️ Edward Snowden's Online Past Revealed *about 7 hours ago*

IndianaGraham thinks Edward Snowden's Online Past Revealed is **WIN** *about 7 hours ago*

buzzardnose
7 hours ago

Oh...whoopdee doo! I find none of this damning to him. All normal stuff that most people online write about.

This is just a lot of nothing bullshit.

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awesomerobot
7 hours ago

And it begins.

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shannonr5
8 hours ago

Some of it may be true, some not. But if you want to get your message across, try to do it without sounding like a douche. Kinda defeats the purpose if you do...

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PauperPrincess
8 hours ago

(1) This guy sounds incredibly narcissistic and douche-y.
(2) People are in such a snit over the NSA spying on people. What's more disturbing, that he freely shared this stuff or someone could find it rather quickly? That wasn't NSA people - that was some schmoe doing research for an article.

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PauperPrincess
8 hours ago

Is that Edward Snowden or Edward Cullen? Damn, is that guy pale.

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tinalibrarian thinks Edward Snowden's Online Past Revealed is **TRASHY** about 9 hours ago

alexandraj14 ❤ Edward Snowden's Online Past Revealed about 9 hours ago

RayFinkle
9 hours ago

Looks like the smear campaign has officially started.

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sargie333 ❤ Edward Snowden's Online Past Revealed about 10 hours ago

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JC3485
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Total narcissist.

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Oli
12 hours ago

IGNORE THE MESSAGE! SMEAR THE MESSENGER!

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12 hours ago

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marks82
10 hours ago

Smear the messenger? Smear the messenger bag, more like. Amirite?
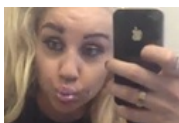
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